

Little Buckaroo's Childcare
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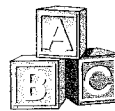


EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1-31-07
HB 2

January 28, 2007

To the Appropriation Subcommittee:

I first want to thank you for your time to listen what I have to say. I was not able to be here in person due to a scheduling conflict. I am here to ask that you hear my story and hope that it will help you make informed decisions about the proposed changes before you.

I have lived in Montana for all of my 33 years. I got pregnant 16 years ago when in high school. I was forced to receive state assistance after I graduated and move out on my own in order to be able to work. I would have never had been able to work without the assistance. I struggled until I was able to get a good paying job a couple years later and no longer needed help.

I married eight years ago and have three beautiful children. I opened a preschool program in May 2000. My program is a nationally accredited registered group home that serves 12 children. I currently serve 4 children that receive child care assistance. Through the last six years I have seen first hand the struggles that low income families face. The cost of child care can be a great burden for families that are living on limited incomes. As a business owner this is a double edged sword. I try to keep rates affordable but I need to make a profit and pay employees. The state assistance program is essential to these families.

The child care assistance payment program allows children at risk to be placed in high quality child care programs that they would otherwise not be able to afford. Studies prove that children that receive quality care in early childhood do better in school later. They also show that children have a lower risk of teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and becoming dependant on welfare and other assistance later. Studies also show that for every dollar that we spend in early care we get \$7-11 in return later in life. We need to give children a good start early this is where it counts. After all they are the future of Montana.

I hope that you will take this information into consideration before making your decision. At risk children and families need your help to secure their futures. What we do now will affect the future generations of Montana. Please make your decision with the best interest of all of your constituents in mind.

Sincerely,
Brenna Randall